

**“** Even though I live on a very limited budget and am busy teaching aikido seven days a week, somehow everything I need to be happy is provided for me. In aikido, as in Zen, there's the idea that whatever you have at the moment is enough.

I sold everything I had and borrowed thousands of dollars to build this dojo. The aikido classes bring in barely enough to pay the rent, and I have to live off two hundred to two hundred fifty dollars a month. My income is so low my accountant laughs.

But I don't in any way feel any sense of risk or deprivation. What happens is, we always want more — we want a bigger house, a better job, lots of cocaine or a Mercedes. I consider myself too fortunate. I feel very grateful for the many friends who helped build this dojo, and for the many nice people who come here to study.

On weekdays, I wake up at five-thirty without the aid of an alarm clock. If I'm sleeping late, I get up at six. I read in bed for a little while, and then I wash up and have some tea. Then I go downstairs to sweep up in front of the dojo and water my plants outside. By six-thirty my students begin arriving for the morning class, which I teach from seven to eight. The first fifteen minutes of class are devoted to stretching and breathing, and then after five minutes of rolling we concentrate on specific aikido techniques.

The class ends with breathing exercises, then we finish with a bow and everyone grabs a broom or a towel and helps clean up the dojo before running off to work. Cleaning is essentially part of the training for the student; it develops the idea of caring for things. We shouldn't become attached to things, but we should take very good care of the things we have, including ourselves — especially in this society, where we take too many things for granted and squander our resources.

Another reason for cleaning is the most traditional: the concept of purity. In the same way that any fine craftsman always takes care of his tools, cleaning bestows a sense of dignity. It's definitely not done for the convenience of the teacher. I usually end up cleaning after my students have left, because they didn't get it as clean as I like!

After the morning class, I go to the Zen temple. I meditate for about half an hour and then have tea with the Zen priests. Sometimes we just chitchat and talk about nothing, or sometimes we talk about Zen — which is also nothing.

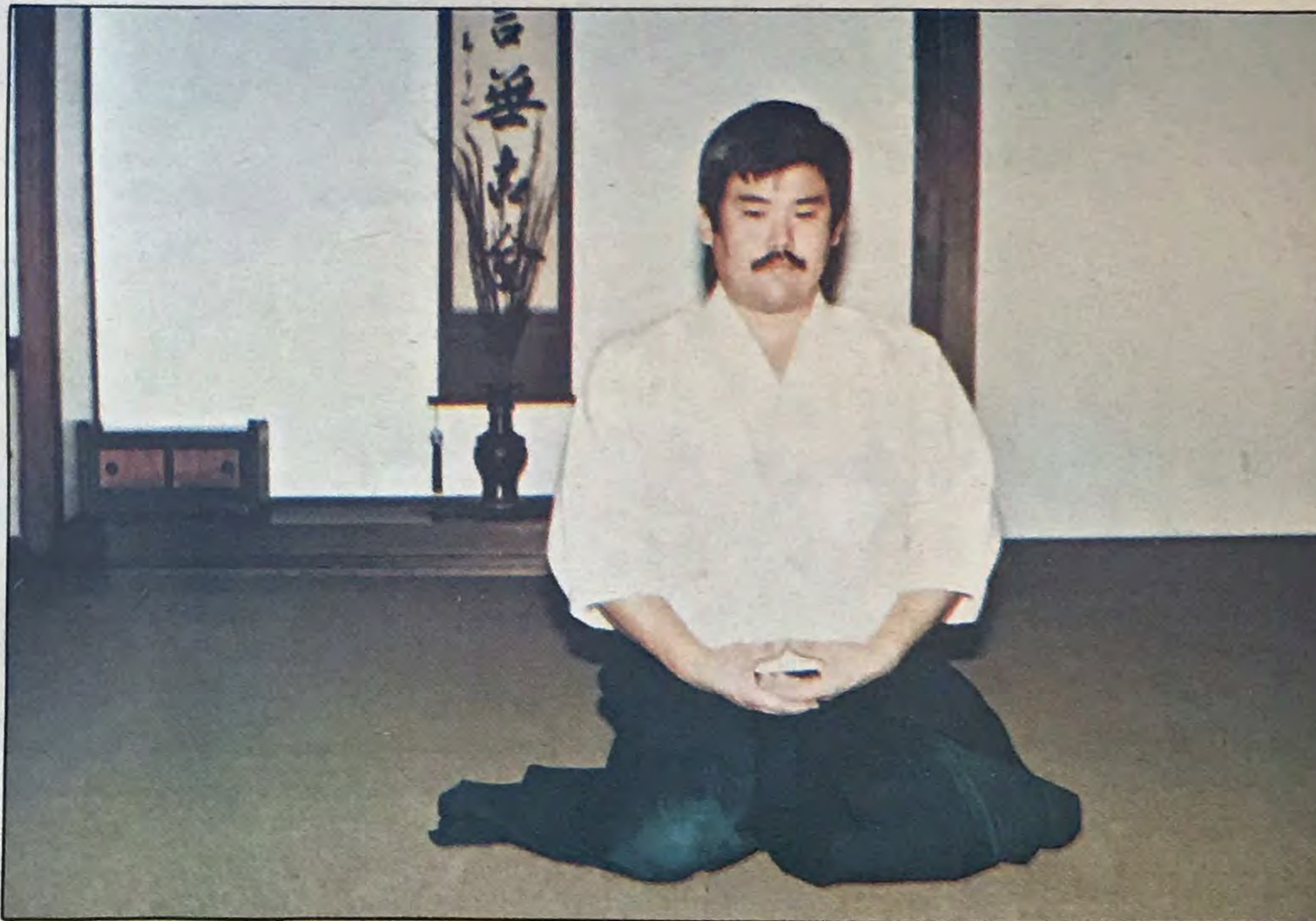
My afternoons are free. My favorite pastime, which I don't do every day, is to browse at Chatterton's Bookstore in Hollywood.

On Tuesday and Friday afternoons, I study the traditional Japanese tea ceremony at the home of Mrs. Matsuo Sosei. It's all very ritualized, and there are a million things you have to remember. Personally, I believe that in order to teach, you must continue to be a student and to learn.

My afternoon nap comes from two to three o'clock. Afterwards, I usually read something, or sometimes I'll watch cartoons on TV while putting around the dojo doing little chores. I open the dojo at five-thirty, and that's when my earliest students start arriving for the six-fifteen class. I teach a second class from seven-thirty to eight-thirty, and once a week we have swordsmanship from eight forty-five to nine-thirty for my special sword students.

The important thing in teaching is the sense of giving, of sacrificing oneself for the benefit of the student. The most important thing is to observe very carefully, and not so much to strictly direct a student's progress as to lay down a strong foundation for each individual's development. How

# FIRST PERSON DANIEL FURUYA



ANNE KNUDSEN/HERALD PHOTOGRAPHER

Aikido instructor Daniel Furuya, 37, in his dojo. Furuya, who began studying martial arts at the age of eight, was born in Los Angeles. He attended John Muir High School in Pasadena and graduated from USC in 1970 with a B.A. in Asian studies. He lives alone and teaches in his dojo in downtown L.A.

they grow and in what direction, that's their own destiny. But by giving them a strong base, their growth is assuredly very stable.

It's easy to correct technical aspects. What's much more difficult is correcting a student's preconceived ideas. I had a new student come in, and the first thing is to learn how to roll. She tried it once: 'Oh, it's no good.' She tried it a second time, same thing. She tried again: 'Oh, I can't do it!' And I said, 'Why are you trying to be perfect? Human beings are not designed to be perfect, so if you try, you just end up being disappointed. Just do it without coloring the action with your own idea of right and wrong, then you can manage to do something, even if it's not perfect.'

When I don't have the sword class, I'll usually go out to eat after the second class with a few of my senior students. None of us has much money, so we'll just go for a bowl of noodles somewhere in the neighborhood. That's when I like to scold my students; they're so busy eating they never hear anything I say, so I figure it must be the most appropriate time to scold them.

I'm in bed by ten.

I recently got a computer. I'm writing several books on various subjects, which I work on whenever I can squeeze in the time. I'm working on a book that will focus on the evolution of martial arts in Japan and how it reflects the general

philosophical development of Japanese culture. Nowadays, the martial arts are becoming very commercialized. As a teacher, I believe we should be very professional about the martial arts, but I have not seen good results come out of its commercialization.

Ultimately aikido is about understanding the other human being. To understand how the techniques work, first one must begin with self-understanding, and then, from that position, we can put ourselves in the other person's shoes. Then you realize we all have the same failures, the same frustrations, disappointments, weaknesses, and you begin to see how all human beings come under one family. What we do to other human beings, we are essentially doing to ourselves. So martial arts should lead to the realization that you can't destroy other people, because it's like destroying yourself. In aikido, the concept of harmony is a very practical philosophy.

Practice is a benefit in itself. You don't expect to get any result from it — no rank, trophies or movie parts. I have written on a wall of the dojo, 'Everything originally is nothing.' By expecting nothing, by letting go, you put yourself in a position to be receptive, and that's the only way you can possibly learn and grow.

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